

DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL SERVICES

744 P Street, Sacramento, CA 95814

June 9, 1988



ALL-COUNTY INFORMATION NOTICE NO. I-50-88

TO: ALL COUNTY WELFARE DIRECTORS

SUBJECT: FOOD STAMP PROGRAM NEGATIVE ACTION ERROR RATE

Federal reviews of California's negative case actions for Federal Fiscal Year (FFY) 1986 indicated an error rate of 12.68 percent. California's own reviews of these actions for FFY 1987 show an error rate of 9.86 percent, adjusted by Federal rereview to 17.73 percent. We note with concern that high percentages of Food Stamp applications are being denied without following the proper procedures.

The following are the areas where state policy and regulations are not being applied correctly:

- o If the household has failed to appear for **two** scheduled interviews and made no subsequent contact to pursue the application, the Notice of Denial shall be sent by the 30th day following the date the application was filed. However, the **applicant** shall be informed that if an office visit for the **rescheduled interview** is made anytime within the 30 day application processing period, the case will be reopened (M.S.63-301.3).
- o If the household failed to provide verification which was requested at the interview, the **application may not be denied before the 30th day** (M.S. 63-301.3).
- o If the CWD requests additional verification after the interview the **household must be given at least 10 days to comply**, which could cause a delay in the initial 30 day application processing period (M.S. 63-301.411).

For example, if additional verification is not requested until the 25th day, the household shall be given until at least the 35th day to provide the information. The CWD shall send the household Notice of Pending Status (DFA 377.1A) by the 30th day following the date of application (M.S. 63-301.431). The Notice of Pending Status must indicate the action the household must take to complete the application process. The application shall be pended for at least 30 days following the date of request for additional verification (i.e., 55th day in this situation) (M.S. 63-301.431).

In addition, errors may be occurring due to differences in the processing requirements for AFDC and Food Stamp cases. Therefore, special attention should be given to public assistance Food Stamp cases to ensure that they are processed within the time frames specified in the regulations and in this notice.

We and the Food and Nutrition Service are very concerned about California's high negative action error rate. It is important that CWDs follow the above guidelines in processing applications and prevent misapplication of policy by intake workers.

If you have any questions, please contact the AFDC and Food Stamp Policy Implementation Bureau at (916) 322-5330.


ROBERT A. HOREL
Deputy Director

cc: CWDA